United Nations S/2002/1051

Security Council

Distr.: General
20 September 2002

Original: English

Letter dated 19 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon the instruction of my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Georgia dated 18 September 2002.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Revaz **Adamia**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 19 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Georgia

In view of the recent alarming development in Georgian-Russian relations, Georgia took note of the information provided to the press by Russia's Foreign Affairs Ministry on the "meeting of Special Representative of the President of Russia for Georgian-Abkhazian issues, Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Mr. V. V. Voloshin, with the Prime Minister of Abkhazia, Mr. A. M. Jergenia".

We regretfully note that in the information Mr. Jergenia is again referred to as "Prime Minister".

It must be noted that on 10 September 2002 the Embassy of Georgia in the Russian Federation forwarded a note verbale to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation expressing the inadmissibility of granting official status to the Abkhaz separatist leaders. The Georgian side has not received a reply to the aforesaid note.

The information disseminated by the Ministry of the Russian Federation leads to the conclusion that the Russian side, by doing so, is attempting to legitimize the Abkhaz separatist regime. Such an approach is demonstrated also in the latest purposeful steps taken by the Russian Federation in Abkhazia, Georgia.

These steps towards the Sokhumi authorities are essentially a continuation of protectionist policy, manifested in the unilateral introduction by the Russian side of a visa-free regime for the population of Abkhazia, Georgia, the process of granting Russian citizenship to them en masse, the further intensification of contacts by the representatives of the Russian State authorities with the separatists and attaching priority to the issue of guaranteeing security for the Sokhumi regime.

It is alarming that in matters related to the Kodory Valley, the Russian side is relying solemnly on the data provided by the Abkhaz sources, ignoring the information supplied by the Georgian side and the United Nations observers. Moreover, the Russian side continues to issue absolutely groundless allegations on the presence of armed bands in the Valley.

From this premise, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Georgia considers that the aforesaid groundless accusations can serve as a source for the array of provocations aimed at the expansion of the separatist regime's control in this region of Georgia.

The Georgian side has, on many occasions, drawn attention to the fact that such conduct on behalf of the Russian side, inconsistency between its statements and actions, determine the rigid and irreconcilable position of the Abkhaz separatists. This casts doubt on the role of the Russian Federation as the facilitator of the conflict and the member of the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General, undermining thus the prospects for the comprehensive settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Georgia is calling on the Russian Federation to demonstrate more responsibility in its statements and to irrevocably

comply with its own commitments taken within the framework of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The Georgian side is appealing to the world community to devote more attention to the settlement of conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, and to undertake decisive measures to avert the escalation of tensions in this region of Georgia.

18 September 2002
Tbilisi